643
622
631

Libyan Bedouin MT9

[Information on the Grand Sanusi of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, religious head of the Sanusiya Order, will be found in Category 793.]

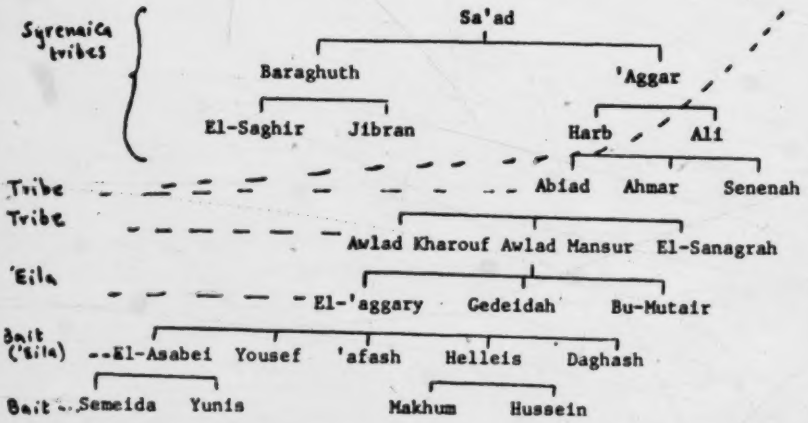
631
●643
619
622

Libyan Bedouin MT9

[For information on the political role of the omda (umda) as a representative of the more powerful and numerous tribal segments within an administrative district, see Category 634.]

There is no paramount chief of the tribe at the present time; yet, the unifying force is the recognition by the group of the tribal law, the Daraieb, as a binding set of rules and as the regulator of behavior within the area. In these terms, Awlad Ali are a clearly delimited group, and it is in terms of the jurisdiction of these rules that Awlad Ali are treated as a unit for administrative purposes by the Egyptian government. Viewed this way, Awlad Ali will be defined as those who recognize and abide by the Daraieb or the customary law. This includes the Murabiteen tribes as well as all those who became part of the tribal organization of Awlad Ali by means of Iktitab. Since the territorial jurisdiction of the Daraieb is limited to the Western Desert of Egypt, those groups and individuals of Awlad Ali origin who have moved on a permanent basis from the area will be excluded from the group. Groups and individuals who live in the area but are not part of the tribal organization of Awlad Ali are not subject to the Daraieb.

Awlad Ali of the Western Desert of Egypt are an offshoot of the Cyrenaica tribes who in turn believe themselves to be the descendants of a unique ancestress Sa'ada.



3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

tions of soil, water, and grazing. We trace the segmentation of the Qalabta alone and see that it has two divisions, the Muasa and the Mahamda. We follow the line of Muhammad alone and note that it splits into three lineages, *'Ailat* Brahim, *'Ailat* al-Mzatal, and *'Ailat* al-Shauqi (there is dispute, arising from quarrels over land, about the legitimacy of this branch). From Mzatal descend the three minor *'ailat*, al-Slailikh, al-Aqta', and Balraba'i. Following only the first line we note that *'Ailat* al-Shlailikh then divides into the various *biyut* shown on the chart, al-Habal, Mustafa, Brahim, &c., the male membership of only one of which, *bait* al-Habal, is presented in the genealogy. Where the name of an *'aila* or *bait* is different from that of its founder, it almost invariably means that the founder's nickname has been used, the Cyrenaican Bedouin having a partiality for nicknames.

Each section of a tribe, from the smallest to the largest, has its Shaikh or Shaikhs. The tribal system, typical of segmentary structures everywhere, is a system of balanced opposition between tribes and tribal sections from the largest to the smallest divisions, and there cannot therefore be any single authority in a tribe. Authority is distributed at every point of the tribal structure and political leadership is limited to situations in which a tribe or a segment of it acts corporately. With a tribe this only happens in war or in dealings with an outside authority which for its own purposes recognizes the tribe as an administrative unit. There cannot, obviously, be any absolute authority vested in a single Shaikh of a tribe when the fundamental principle of tribal structure is opposition between its segments, and in such segmentary systems there is no state and no government as we understand these institutions; and criminal law is absent and civil law exists only in a very rudimentary form. Consequently the exact status of a Shaikh can only be defined in terms of a complicated network of kinship ties and structural relations. It is only necessary here to emphasize that his social position is unformalized and that he must in no sense be regarded as a ruler or administrator. Bedouin respect their Shaikhs, but they do not regard them as superiors. Rather their influence and wealth are considered as capital to be drawn on for the benefit of whoever is in need of them. So long as a Shaikhly family can keep their prestige,